



Bee Safety

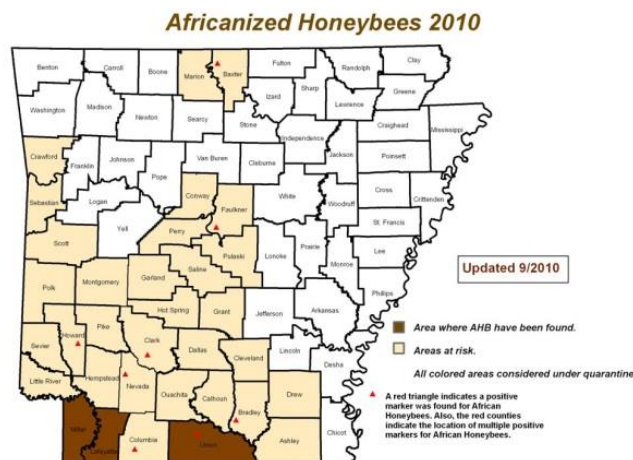
The best safety advice is to avoid an encounter with unfriendly Africanized Bees.

- Be alert for danger. Remember that AHB sting to defend their colony, so be on the look out for honey bee swarms and colonies.
- Be alert for bees coming in and out of an opening such as a crack in a wall, or the hole in a utility box.
- Listen for the hum of an active bee colony.
- Look for bees in holes in the ground, holes in trees, and in sheds.
- Be extra careful when moving junk that has been lying around.
- Be alert for bees that are acting strangely. Quite often bees will display some preliminary defensive behavior before going into a full-fledged attack.
- When you are outdoors, in a rural area, a park or wilderness reserve, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye out for bees the way you would watch out for snakes and other natural dangers.
- Don't panic at the sight of a few bees foraging in the flowers. Bees are generally very docile as they go about their normal activities.



Where Are They Now?

The AHB has been found in Southwestern Arkansas:



Africanized Bees probably present the greatest danger in the U.S. to American beekeeping and American agriculture in general.

AHBs often enter European colonies to mingle and mate with them. Such mating results in more hybrid bees having African genes and tendencies dominating over European ones. An entire colony may suddenly take on aggressive and short-tempered behavior.

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Africanized Honeybees in Arkansas



"Africanized bees" or "killer bees" have been found in Arkansas. They were discovered in an Arkansas State Plant Board trap in southwestern Arkansas, near the town of Brightstar, in Miller County.

The AHB's are descendants of southern African bees imported in 1956 by Brazilian scientists attempting to breed a honeybee better adapted to the South American tropics. When some of these bees escaped quarantine in 1957, they began breeding with local Brazilian honeybees, quickly multiplying and extended their range throughout South and Central America at a rate greater than 200 miles per year.

Before coming to North America, Africanized bees acquired the name "killer bees" because of a misunderstanding of their behavior and a mistranslation of the Portuguese used to describe them when they first entered Brazil. Although these bees are much more defensive, an average of one person per year has died from their attacks in this country. People can bee proof their homes and be educated to the risks to minimize adverse affects.



AHB Facts

It is not necessary to disturb a hive to incite an AHB attack. In fact, Africanized bees have been known to respond to mundane occurrences like noises, pedestrians, or vibrations of vehicles or equipment.

Though their venom is no more potent than that of the European honeybees, AHBs attack in far greater numbers and pursue perceived enemies for greater distances. Once disturbed colonies may remain agitated for 24 hours, attacking people and animals within a range of a quarter mile from the hive.

Africanized honeybees:

- Are slightly smaller than the European honey bee, but only an expert can tell them apart,
- Defend their nest more rapidly than its European cousins,
- Usually sting in greater numbers,
- Are less selective about where they nest,
- Swarm more often than European honeybees,
- Do not have stronger venom than European honeybees,
- Each bee can only sting one time and they die after stinging,
- Collect nectar and pollen and make honey,
- Are not native to the U.S.

Some Potential Bee Nesting Sites Near Your Home

- Holes or cracks in building walls or foundations
- Holes in trees
- Underneath mobile homes
- Culverts or drainage pipes
- Inverted flower pots
- Old tires
- Bird houses
- Barns or sheds
- Woodpiles
- Wooden spools often used as playground equipment.

Seek professional help in removing any potential Africanized bee colonies.



What to do if attacked by Africanized Honeybees

- The best method of escaping a bee attack is to cover your head and run for shelter,
- Any covering for your body, especially your head and face, will help you escape,
- If you don't have anything, grab a blanket, oat, towel, or anything that

will give you momentary relief while you look for an avenue of escape. If you have nothing else, pull your shirt up over your face.

- The stings you may get on your chest and abdomen will be far less threatening than those you would get in your facial areas,
- Try to take shelter as quickly as possible. Get in a house, car or tent and close the windows and doors,
- DO NOT jump in water as the bees will still be there when you come up for air,
- Once you are away from the bees, evaluate the situation. If you've received more than 15 stings or are having symptoms other than local pain and swelling, seek medical attention immediately,
- If you see someone else being stung or think someone else is in danger, call 911 immediately,
- Remove the stingers as soon as possible to stop the venom from entering the body. Do this by scraping the stingers with a fingernail, credit card, or dull knife.
- Do not remove stingers with fingers or tweezers as this will force more toxins into the victim.